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ABSTRACT

This model pre-student teaching laboratory program is a modification of the traditional field experience program for secondary teacher education students. Rather than being assigned to individual teachers in a laboratory school, students are organized into cells for exposure to selected professionally oriented experiences in different types of schools. Each cell consists of about 20 students, a faculty member from the area of secondary education who serves as coordinator, five secondary school teachers from the laboratory school and teachers from other cooperating schools. The program is divided into cycles which include preparation, field experience, and follow-up sessions. Evaluation indicates that program participants profited considerably in development of their perceptions about students, teachers, classrooms, methods, and themselves and were able to apply these perceptions in the student teaching which followed. A followup study for further evaluation has been designed. Significant aspects of the program are being incorporated into the regular secondary school teacher preparation program. (Two appendixes contain a list of the personal and professional areas in which perceptual development is anticipated and a list of behavioral objectives.) (RT)

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Part I
A Summary of the
CELL OF EXPERIENCE
Program

The Cell of Experience[1] program was developed to supplement and improve upon the typical participation experience for pre-student teachers in secondary education. Rather than relying heavily upon a teacher-based program organized around assignment of individual students to teachers in a laboratory school, the Cell may be described as experience based, since the university coordinator works with cooperating teachers to plan and implement selected, professionally oriented experiences which pre-student teachers complete in a series of exposures to school classrooms of various types.

A Cell consists of approximately twenty undergraduate majors in secondary education, a Teachers College coordinator, five teachers from the Burris Laboratory School, and base teachers from other cooperating or satellite schools. The structure is perception oriented and organized to move pre-student teachers sequentially through a series of systematic experiences in which they attempt to analyze their perceptions of teachers; students; peers; and, eventually, themselves as prospective teachers.

Pre-student teachers in a Cell meet in one-hour sessions for four or five consecutive days with the university coordinator to prepare for specific observation or involvement in a laboratory situation. The Cell is then subdivided into smaller groups of students, who spend the next three daily class periods in secondary school classrooms. The following three periods are spent with the university coordinator in a cell group discussing what transpired in the laboratory classrooms. The sequence is continued through several cycles oriented to different objectives throughout the twelve-week quarter.

The Cell of Experience program was implemented experimentally at Ball State University during the Winter and Spring Quarters of 1968-69 and is being continued during the current academic year.

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[1]Modeled after the concept of a biological cell, which adapts its characteristics to its particular function

Part II
A Case Study of the
CELL OF EXPERIENCE
Program

Description and Development of the Program

The model pre-student teaching laboratory Cell of Experience program for secondary education students, described in this case study, was developed in response to three distinct needs: (1) the need to develop a program that was not limited to observation and participation without adequate provision for analysis and understanding, (2) the need to guarantee exposure to encounters and experiences with specific educational phenomena not now accessible to students engaged in pre-student teaching experiences, and (3) the need to conserve resources of the Burris Laboratory School by expanding the program into noncampus situations.

The Cell of Experience is basically different from the usual participation course, which relies heavily for success upon laboratory school teachers to whose classes the pre-student teachers are assigned at random. The traditional course, then, is teacher based because the laboratory school cooperating teachers determine the students' experiences. The Cell of Experience, by contrast, is experience based because the university coordinator works with cooperating teachers to plan and implement selected educational experiences which pre-student teachers complete in a series of exposures to campus and noncampus laboratory school classrooms.

A typical Cell, in this model, consists of about twenty pre-student teachers, a faculty member from the area of Secondary Education in the Teachers College, five secondary school teachers from the Burris Laboratory School, and base teachers from other cooperating or satellite schools. Members of a Cell develop a Cell of Experience program around laboratory situations with unique potentials for enhancing the professional experience and development of participants. The program typically involves exposure to the campus laboratory school, a public school in a community adjacent to Muncie, and a school in an inner city location. Specific schools with innovative programs or other special characteristics are included as locations for independent study or field trips.

A typical Cell of Experience program is scheduled into a pattern of four daily one-hour periods for planning and preparation[1] by pre-student teachers under the direction of a Teachers College coordinator, three one-hour exposures to classrooms in the selected laboratory situation by small subgroups of the Cell, and three follow-up sessions. The pattern is repeated, with some variations, for each laboratory setting during the twelve-week quarter.

The model for the Cell of Experience program evolved from a survey conducted by faculty working in the Secondary Participation program at Ball State University in the spring of 1967. At that time the pre-student teaching laboratory experience (Participation) was concentrated in the Burris Laboratory School. The survey sought to distinguish between professional laboratory experiences appropriate for pre-student teachers which were unique to a laboratory school and those that could be provided in another educational setting. Results were translated into a Conceptual Framework (see Appendix A) and a statement of the Behavioral Objectives for the Cell of Experience (see Appendix B) to guide development of the experimental program.

During the Winter Quarter, 1968-69, three model Cells were created and tested. In the spring the program was expanded to include about one hundred pre-student teachers, representing one-third of the secondary education participants that term. Plans for the 1969-70 academic year are geared to expansion of the program and establishment of additional cooperating school sites.

Program Objectives

General and behavioral objectives for the experimental Cell of Experience program are presented in Appendices A and B. Simply stated, the overall objectives are listed as follows: (1) to aid the pre-student teacher to increase his understanding of himself and his potential capacity as a member of the teaching profession,

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[1]Planning and preparation periods stress significance of methodology, relevance of curriculum, use of audio-visual aids, and independent study.

(2) to improve his understanding of teachers and the teaching task, (3) to advance his understanding of the behavior of secondary school students, and (4) to develop positive feelings of competence and confidence regarding the impending student teaching experience.

Personnel Involved

Development of the experimental Cell of Experience program was a cooperative effort within the Teachers College, involving Secondary Participation personnel in the Department of Secondary, Adult, and Higher Education and in the Burris Laboratory School. Dr. Richard C. Kunkel directed the effort, with Professors Robert Meadows (now at Wright State University), Carl Keener, Anthony Tovatt, Patrick Struve, Terry Jackson, and Joseph Waggener as significant contributors. Other Teachers College faculty who joined the original cadre in implementing roles are Professors Harry Bell, Larry Lucas, James McElhinney, and Donald Jones.[1]

Budget

During the Winter Quarter of 1968-69 the Department of Secondary, Adult, and Higher Education initiated the experimental Cell of Experience program under a minimum budget. For the Spring Quarter an emergency fund was established. Major expenses, amounting to about $3,000, involved costs of transporting close to one hundred students on a regular basis to a cooperating school in western Delaware County. Minor expenses were incurred for supplies and materials consumed as part of the visual and audio phases of the Cell program.

A more comprehensive budget for the 1969-70 academic year provides funds for transportation, remuneration of base teachers in the satellite schools, and purchase of audio tapes used in evaluating the program.

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[1]Public school administrators and teachers involved in the program are too numerous to list in toto. Some who played more prominent roles were Mr. Richard Johnson, Principal of Wes-Del High School, Gaston, Indiana; Mr. Gene Rhodes, Director of Title III Project, East Noble High School, Kendallville, Indiana; Mr. Stuart Sheeley, Director of Title III OAV Project, Indianapolis Public Schools, Indianapolis, Indiana; and Miss Jean Wood, Supervisor of Language Arts, Indianapolis Public Schools, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Contribution to the Improvement of Teacher Education

The Cell of Experience is conceived as a model for providing professional pre-student teaching laboratory experiences in teacher education. Its uniqueness lies in provision for selected kinds of analyzed laboratory experiences planned for small group units, rather than dependence upon individual assignments of students to a single teacher or classroom as the basic plan for a professional pre-student teaching laboratory program. Furthermore, it functions as a supplement to, rather than as a replacement for, a laboratory school oriented program.

The multischool and multiexperience approach holds real potentiality for improving pre-student teaching laboratory experiences. It incorporates the concept that professional laboratory experiences in teacher education should be a cooperative effort and responsibility of the teacher education institution and public education. The flexible Cell of Experience permits adaptation to special needs and utilization of varied resources. The model time-use schedule guarantees adequate and specific preparation for effective use of a laboratory situation, plus follow-up time for reflection, interpretation, and generalization under guidance. The Cell provides a setting for participants to share in planning and evaluation; to share a unique experience with peers; and to engage in individual, small group, and larger group learning activities.

Evaluation

A comprehensive analysis of the experimental Cell of Experience program was conducted at the end of the Spring Quarter, 1969. Statistical research methodology was supplemented by direct feedback from base teachers, participants, educational administrators, and university personnel. In addition, a study of the model program by Dr. Robert Meadows (reported in his unpublished doctoral dissertation entitled A Case Study of the Pre-Student Teaching Laboratory Experiences: An Administrative Design for Experience Assignments, Ball State University, 1969)

included detailed analyses based on the participant observation methodology described by Phillip W. Jackson[1] and Louis M. Smith.[2]

Evidence to date indicates that participants in the Cell of Experience program profited considerably in development of their perceptions about students, teachers, classrooms, methods, and themselves and were able to apply these perceptions in student teaching. They persisted in attempts to employ large and small group discussion techniques rather than lecturing, to introduce oral-aural-visual approaches in language arts classes, and to use video tape units for various purposes. They also tried to approach students in the warm, supportive manner characteristic of teachers with whom they had worked in their Cell of Experience. Attitude changes of participants toward self and secondary school students were demonstrated in continued growth during student teaching toward self-confidence and increased respect for students.

One of the more innovative methods of cell evaluation employed production of "Living Letters" by participants at the close of the Cell of Experience program. Each participant, with the Conceptual Framework for the Cell of Experience in mind, dictated a fifteen minute tape listing his "I Believes." After a year of teaching, the tape will be sent to him for replay and restatement of his position. The original and new tapes are then to be returned to the Teachers College, Ball State University, for further evaluation of the Cell of Experience.

Through all phases of evaluation, teachers, administrators, and pre-student teachers were enthusiastically positive about their experiences. Significant aspects of the Cell of Experience program are being incorporated into the regular program for preparing secondary school teachers at Ball State University. The model may be equally applicable in other colleges and universities.

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[1]Louis M. Smith and William Geoffrey, The Complexities of an Urban Classroom; An Analysis Toward a General Theory of Teaching (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968).

[2]Phillip W. Jackson, Life in Classrooms (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968).

APPENDIX A

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CELL OF EXPERIENCE

The CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK for the CELL OF EXPERIENCE is structured to assist students and faculty in observing and analyzing a professional laboratory situation. It identifies the personal and professional areas in which perceptual development is anticipated and toward which planning and evaluation should be oriented.

Perceptions of Adolescence Regarding:

- -secondary school as a social and learning environment as evident in the Burris Laboratory School and other schools
- -the contemporary generation gap between adolescents and adults
- -evaluation of various classroom teaching and learning styles
- -climate of learning--Independent Study and the responsibility of students
- -social interaction in the classroom

Perceptions of Teachers Regarding:

- -secondary school as a social and learning environment as evident in the Burris Laboratory School and other schools
- -the contemporary adolescent society
- -the cultural gap between adolescents and adults
- -practices and activities in small group instruction
- -practicies and activities in large group instruction
- -methods and techniques for effective use of audio-visual equipment such as audio, movie, film projector, display boards, overhead projectors, television, etc.
- -analysis of teaching styles and practices as related to patterns of student deployment

-the influence of the community and other forces in curriculum and decisions regarding school

-the climate of learning within the school

-the use of nonreading units of instruction

-problems in selection of methods, techniques, and materials

-responsibility of students and teachers for Independent Study

-individualization of instruction

-skills necessary for effective classroom questioning

-the use of reading as a source of information, both cognitive and affective

-the use of nontraditional activities in the classroom

-evaluation in the classroom and the evaluation of test construction with a conceptual framework

Perceptions of the Community Regarding:

-expectations about perpetuation of the culture

-expectations of change in the culture through schooling

-expectations of adolescent school behavior

-expectations of successful and/or unsuccessful schooling

-effect of variances of socioeconomic status related to quality of education

Perceptions of Participants Regarding:

-secondary school as a social and learning environment as evident in the Burris Laboratory School and other schools

-the contemporary adolescent society

-the cultural gap between adolescents and adults

-social interaction in the classroom

-practices and activities in small group instruction

-practices and activities in large group instruction

-methods and techniques for effective use of audio-visual equipment such as audio, movie, film projector, display boards, overhead projectors, television, etc.

-analysis of teaching styles and practices as related to patterns of student deployment

-the climate of learning within the school

-expectations about perpetuation of the culture

-expectations of change in the culture through schooling

-laboratory experience and its relevance to teacher education

-Independent Study as a way of learning

-individualization of instruction

-the arrival at conclusions about what "I believe . . ." regarding teaching, the classroom, the immediate culture, and the society at large

APPENDIX B

TENTATIVE BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES FOR THE CELL OF EXPERIENCE

As a result of the Cell of Experience, participants should:

1. Show particular interest in wanting to understand students as individuals

2. Be interested in creative, nontraditional approaches to instruction

3. Be informed about, and willing to evaluate and make judgments on, patterns of classroom deployment

4. Be interested in the individual differences of students and attempt to develop curricular and classroom experiences based on these differences

5. Be increasingly positive about looking forward to student teaching and assumption of the full responsibilities of a teacher

6. Be aware of, and sensitive to, problems of community pressure and their relationships to curricular experiences and selection of content

7. Be aware of the multiplicity of socioeconomic levels of school populations and have some understanding of the varying conditions with which teachers work

8. Be frank and open about the participation experience and willing to contribute significant data for evaluation of the experience